

PRESS RELEASE

ASTRA Praises Formation of Interagency Working Group on Advanced Technologies for Education and Training

Washington, D.C. (October 23, 2003) - **ASTRA**, the **Alliance for Science & Technology Research in America**, today praised the formation of an Interagency Working Group to foster the development, application and deployment of advanced technologies in education and training in the United States. The **Interagency Working Group on Advanced Technologies for Education and Training** will convene under the oversight of the **White House National Science and Technology Council** and it will report to both the Council's Committee on Technology and its Committee on Science. Commerce Department Under Secretary for Technology Phillip J. Bond and Department of Education Director of Educational Technology John P. Bailey will co-chair the group.

Dr. Mary L. Good, Chairman of ASTRA as well as Dean of the Donaghey School of Information Science and Systems Engineering at the University of Arkansas, Little Rock lauded the initiative, stating "the application of advanced technologies in education and training can play a vital role in helping American workers and U.S. industry stay competitive in an increasingly global labor market."

"Today's action is important for the nation's overall research and education enterprise. This educational technology innovation initiative has the potential to foster critical investments in fundamental research in physical sciences and engineering disciplines at colleges and universities, as well as building closer relationships between academia and industry as this new knowledge is translated to products and services to for the education and training arena," said Dr. Good. "And ultimately, these technologies will find their way back into our academic institutions to revolutionize the way students and workers learn. This will provide a competitive advantage for Americans in an environment where nations around the world are developing well-educated and highly skilled workers and using their lower wage rates to compete against American workers."

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Good added: "More than a decade of under-funding in specific scientific disciplines has already created a severe imbalance in the basic research portfolio. This past inattention will continue to plague our economy at all levels for the foreseeable future, but today's action is one of several steps needed to kick-start improvement in higher-order thinking and reasoning skills, analytical skills, problem-solving and

creative thinking and other skills which will may lead us in the right direction. Ultimately, the intellectual products produced by our society affect our standard of living, our national security, and our freedom.

Good cited the October 16, 2002 release of the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) Panel Report "Assessing the U.S. R&D Investment" which documented a need to improve funding levels for the physical sciences and engineering, as well as a recent **National Research Council** (NRC) report ***Trends in Federal Support of Research & Graduate Education*** which confirms the under-funding of basic research in most of the physical and mathematical sciences and engineering.

Dr. Good previously served as Under Secretary for Technology at the U.S. Department of Commerce and has held various senior positions in industry and academia as well. ASTRA is a broad-based collaboration representing industry, academe and leading professional and scientific organizations representing the physical and mathematical sciences and engineering.

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